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Test 4

QUESTION #05

1 INTRODUCTION.

"Unity, faith and discipline," the motto of Pakistan's founder, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, serves as the cornerstone of national integration, emphasizing that a nation's strength lies in the cohesive bond of its diverse populace, rather than just its geographical boundaries. National integration in Pakistan is the process of fostering a collective identity among various ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. It aims to transcend parochial loyalties to build a unified state under a common national purpose. Meanwhile, both political and economic factors significantly impact national integration, but political factors, particularly instability and poor governance, often weaken integration more profoundly because they directly influence how economic resources are managed and distributed, leading to trust deficit and grievances.

2 PRINCIPLES OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN PAKISTAN:

NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN PAKISTAN:

National integration in Pakistan is the process of fostering unity among various ethnic, religious and linguistic groups to foster a sense of oneness and harmony. - Language is one of the vital

Date: _____

principles (Urdu in case of Pakistan) in striking a sense of commonness in various ethnicities living in Pakistan i.e. Pakhtoons, Balochis, Sindhis, Punjabis, Kashmiris and others. Such cohesion plays a significant role in state of national emergency, such as during a national disaster or in clashes against India.

PRINCIPLES OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION,

Current national policy, including the National Security Policy (NSP) 2022-2026 defines integration through several core principles

CITIZEN CENTRIC APPROACH: Prioritizes the security, prosperity and fundamental rights of individual citizens regardless of their background. Colour, race, language, ethnicity has nothing to do with not extending basic rights to a citizen.

ISLAMIC IDENTITY AND TOLERANCE:

It utilizes shared religious values as a unifying force while officially discouraging sectarian, parochial and tribal prejudices. This principle also emphasizes on interfaith and inter-provincial harmony and insists on tolerance.

Date: _____

CONSTITUTIONAL SUPREMACY AND FEDERALISM

This principle emphasizes provincial autonomy and fair distribution of power as outlined in the 1973 Constitution and 18th Amendment. Fair distribution of power among provinces will keep them away from inferiority complex as well as from Henious acts.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

This principle ensures that all federating units have an equal stake in national progress and equitable access to resources. either it is natural resources like water, Natural gas or human development resources, such as education, employment etc.

PLURALISM:

It implies the recognition of ethnic and linguistic diversity not as a liability but as a source of national strength that must be mainstreamed.

3 FACTORS (ECONOMIC + POLITICAL) IMPACTING NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN PAKISTAN.

While political and economic factors are interdependent, Political factors are generally considered more influential because they provide the structural framework that dictates economic outcomes.

1. POLITICAL FACTORS (The Strategic Framework)

Political factors often act as the primary catalyst for integration because they manage diversity and conflict.

A: STRENGTHENING FACTORS

i- DEVOLUTION OF POWER:

When power is devolved from center to provinces and local governments, it reduces the trust deficit between regional entities and the federal state. For example, the 18th Amendment and the empowerment of Local Government systems - When provinces are free to control their health and education sectors, it will ensure a Sindhi and Balochi to feel that their local leaders are making decisions for them.

ii- Democratic Continuity:

Regular, fair and transparent elections encourage regional parties to form national alliances. For example when a party from one province (e.g. PPP from Sindh) forms a coalition with a party from another (e.g. PML-N from Punjab), it forces political leaders to negotiate and represent a cross-provincial agenda.

B. WEAKENING FACTORS

i- POLITICAL POLARIZATION

High level of hostility between national parties create social divisions - Political polarization between major parties can lead to "ethnic voting," where people vote based on their tribe rather than national policy - This us Vs them rhetoric creates social fault lines where citizens prioritize their party or ethnic loyalty over national cohesion.

ii CENTRALIZATION OF POWER (ELITE CULTURE)

If politics becomes a "winner-takes-all" game centered in one province, others feel alienated, for instance, the perception of "Punjab-centrism" in federal appointments or development priorities can make smaller provinces like Balochistan and Sindh feel like "junior partners" in the federation. Thus weakens the national bond.

POLITICAL FACTORS

STRENGTHS

1- Devolution of powers

2- Democratic Continuity

WEAKNESS

1- Political polarization

2- Elite Capture

Date: _____

2

ECONOMIC FACTORS (The Material Foundation)

Economic factors provide the "practical reason" for people to stay united.

A- STRENGTHENING FACTORS

i- INTER-PROVINCIAL TRADE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Inter-provincial trade and infrastructure links create a "chain of interest" between different ethnic regions, making conflict more expensive.

Example: The CPEC Western route links Gwadar in Balochistan to the northern borders. This makes links between Gwadar sea port and Punjab industrial hubs via trade routes in KPK. In this way all regions are connected and economically dependent on peace and stability in Balochistan, fostering mutual interest.

ii- EQUITABLE FISCAL TRANSFERS:-

When national wealth is equitably distributed among provinces on an equity basis to uplift underdeveloped areas, sense of alienation reduces. For instance, The National Finance Commission (NFC) Award distributes the Federal Divisible pool based on population.

Date: _____

poverty, and revenue collection. Giving extra weight to "backwardness" help provinces like Balochistan feel the state is trying to bridge the gap.

B. WEAKENING FACTORS

i- REGIONAL ECONOMIC DISPARITY

Vast gaps in standard of living fuel resentment - For example: Poverty levels exceeding 70% in parts of Balochistan compared to much lower rates in Central Punjab. This disparity makes it easy for separatist groups to argue that the state is neglecting specific regions.

ii- RESOURCE MAL-DISTRIBUTION:

Resource mal-distribution results in disputes over the ownership of natural resources.

If a region like Balochistan feels its natural resources, Reko Diq and Sui Gas are being used to develop other areas and is not being reinvested in their schools and hospitals, it creates a sense of "internal colonialism", which is primary driver of separatist movements.

Date: _____

ECONOMIC FACTORS

STRENGTHS

1- Inter Provincial trade and Infrastructure

2- Equitable Fiscal Transfers

WEAKNESSES

1- Regional Economic Disparity

2- Resource Mal-distribution

CONCLUSION

WHICH IS MORE IMPACTFUL?

POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC

While economic disparities create the "fuel for discontent, it is the political environment that either ignites it or manages it. Effective political representation is the most powerful tool for national integration, as it ensures that even in times of economic hardships, all federating units feel they are being treated fairly. In short, political factors carry more weight in Pakistan's context. Economic grievances (such as unequal wealth distribution) are typically symptoms of political failures, such as lack of inclusive and effective government. Therefore, political reform is seen as a prerequisite for sustainable economic integration and long-term national unity.